

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 04169 081358Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /077 W
-----042352 081408Z /75

R 081145Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6041
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 4169

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, JO
SUBJECT: TRIBAL CLASH RESULTS IN ONE DEATH

1. TRIBAL CLASH TOOK PLACE IN VILLAGE OF SAHAB TEN MILES
SE OF AMMAN MAY 4, RESULTING IN DEATH OF 16 YEAR OLD BOY.
IN ADDITION, 40 PERSONS WERE INJURED (10 BY THROWN STONES
AND REMAINDER BY GUNSHOT WOUNDS) AND 60 ARRESTED (SOME OF
WHOM STILL IN HOSPITAL). FIGHTING APPARENTLY ERUPTED
BETWEEN MEMBERS OF EAST BANK ZIYUD AND MAHARIMAH TRIBAL
CLANS OVER UNHAPPINESS WITH RESULTS OF MAYORAL ELECTIONS.

2. ALTHOUGH POLICE WERE ABLE TO BREAK UP FIGHTING AFTER
VIOLENT FIFTEEN-MINUTE FREE-FOR-ALL BETWEEN TWO
CLANS, POLICE AUTHORITIES CONSIDER SITUATION STILL VERY
UNSTABLE. ONE DEATH AND HIGH INJURY COUNT PROVIDE MORE
THAN SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR CLAN MEMBERS TO SEEK REVENGE
AND TOUCH OFF RENEWED BATTLING. VILLAGE IS WELL-KNOWN
BASE FOR SMUGGLING TRAFFIC BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND
SYRIA; VILLAGE'S CUSTOMARY LAWLESSNESS COUPLED WITH
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DICTATES OF PRESERVATION OF TRIBAL HONOR ACCOUNT FOR
QLAN'S WILD WEST APPROACH TO SETTLING OF DIFFERENCES.
IN ADDITION, HIGH PERCENTAGE OF VILLAGERS ARE OR WERE
MEMBERS OF JORDAN ARMED FORCES, WHICH POLICE AUTHORITIES
BELIEVE EXPLAINS PREVALENCE OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.
(POLICE CONFISCATED THREE MACHINE GUNS, LARGE NUMBER OF
SMALL ARMS AND FORTY GRENADES DURING RESIDENCE SEARCHES.)

POLICE ARE WATCHING SITUATION CLOSELY, AND ARE PREPARED
FOR MORE TROUBLE BETWEEN THESE TWO CLANS WHO HAVE,
NO DOUBT, BEEN FEUDING FOR GENERATIONS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE
THIS CLASH IN ITSELF HAS ANY WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR
JORDANIAN POLITICAL SCENE, BUT IS RATHER AN EXAMPLE OF
DELICATE TRIBAL BALANCE WHICH MUST BE HANDLED WITH SKILL
AND SENSITIVITY BY KING, GOJ AND SECURITY FORCES.
SUDDARTH

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Message Attributes

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